

PRESS RELEASE

Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery grows to serve Texas veterans

Veterans' advocates gather to celebrate groundbreaking for new columbarium

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AUSTIN — Central Texas veterans' advocates joined Jerry Patterson, chairman of the Texas Veterans Land Board, Congressman John Carter and top officials with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to break ground on an expansion to the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery.

A new columbarium, able to contain the remains of as many as 1,600 Texas veterans, will be built with a \$1 million federal grant.

"Even as we work to cut spending, Texans fulfill our obligations to our veterans," Patterson said. "Interment at this Texas State Veterans Cemetery isn't an entitlement - it is a right that each and every Texas veteran has earned through their service."

Congressman John Carter, chairman of the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee and co-chairman of the House Army Caucus, made time to travel from Washington, D.C. to attend the event.

"The Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery is a source of pride and honor for Fort Hood and the area community," Carter said. "We're here today to honor this beautiful resting place for the brave men and women, who either gave their lives to keep our nation safe or who spent their military career standing for freedom and liberty."

Joshua de Leon from the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs joined Carter and Patterson to break ground on the columbarium to the cheers of Central Texas veterans' advocates.

The Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery in Killeen was the first of four Texas State Veterans Cemeteries statewide. The cemetery was dedicated in 2006 and has since become a nexus for the Central Texas Veterans Community. The cemetery has an ultimate capacity for up to 50,000 burials and interments of cremated remains. Among the features: A covered, open-air structure for committal services, a visitors center, a computer system for locating specific graves or interments, an attractive gateway entrance, a 60-foot flagpole, a paved assembly area for special ceremonies, such as Veterans Day and Memorial Day observances, an avenue of flags and a memorial walkway.

For additional information on Texas State Veterans Cemeteries and other veterans programs offered by the Texas Veterans Land Board, call 1-800-252-VETS (1-800-252-8387), or visit the VLB Web site at www.texasveterans.com.

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